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Report of the Secretary of the Navy, communicating the report of a board of examiners to make experimental trials of plans and inventions for preventing explosions of steam boilers. From Prof. Johnson.

A report to the Navy Department of the U. S., on American coals applicable to steam navigation and to other purposes. By Walter R. Johnson. pp. 607. Washington, 1844. From the Author.

A communication from the American Philosophical Society was read, dated Dec. 6, 1844, acknowledging the receipt of No. 5, Vol. 2, of the Proceedings.

Mr. Haldeman exhibited specimens of the male and female, and of the larva and pupa of Corydalus cornutus, and made some remarks upon its habits and structure. The larva is aquatic, but leaves the water and constructs a cavity beneath a stone, in which it changes. The prothorax is much larger in the larva than in the pupa and imago. The mandibles and labrum are prominent at all stages; the antennæ very small in the larva, and situated at the external base of the mandibles. The male of the perfect insect is known by the large arcuate mandibles, and both sexes present the remarkable peculiarity of a vertical perforation through the head, at the anterior base of the antennæ.

Stated Meeting, January 21, 1845.

VICE PRESIDENT MORTON in the Chair.

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Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 4, No. 31, July to Dec. 1844. From the Society.

Esquisse d'une histoire de la Philosophie Chinoise: par G. Pauthier. From the Author, through Mr. R. K. Haight.

The Chairman read a letter from Mr. Richard K. Haight, dated Paris, 6th November, 1844, acknowledging the receipt of his notice of election as a Correspondent, and in reference to M. Pauthier's work above mentioned.

Dr. Morton also read the following extracts from a letter addressed to him as Vice President of the Academy, by Dr. Richard Lepsius, the distinguished head of the Prussian scientific commission in Egypt, dated Island of Philæ, 15th Sept., 1844.

"It will interest you, perhaps, to read the summary of the communications made by me to Mr. John Pickering, of Boston, President of the American Oriental Society of that city. They give some of the results of our journey into Ethiopia, and especially in regard to the ancient population of Meroë, their language, their descendants, and their relation to Egypt,—showing that the Meroïtes were a people of a red complexion, and that they spoke the language of the Bishariba [Bishárrees?] of the present day, *which is decidedly Caucasian*, and very rich in grammatical forms, and important on account of the place it occupies among the other Caucasian languages.

But another remarkable fact which presented itself to us in Ethiopia, may perhaps have a more immediate bearing on the object of your Society. In the province of Butir-el-Hagar, at a long day's journey above Wady-Halfa, and near the cataract of Semneh, the Nile is contracted between high rocks which approach each other within a distance of three hundred and eighty feet; and on these yet remain the foundations of two very ancient fortresses, erected by the conqueror of the country, Sesourtasen III, (Osortasen,) the fifth king of the *twelfth dynasty*, and not of the XVIIth dynasty, as hitherto supposed.

Upon the enormous blocks constituting these structures, as well as upon the rocks themselves, I have found a series of eighteen hieroglyphical inscriptions, of which thirteen belong to the reign of the immediate successor of Osortasen, viz., Amenenha III, the Mœris of the Greeks, the same who built the pyramids and excavated the lake of the Fayoum, as recently discovered by M. Linant. The other five inscriptions belong to the last king of the XIIth Dynasty, Amenenha IV, and to the first two kings of the XIIIth Dynasty. All these inscriptions, which embrace a period of nearly fifty years, have no other object than to mark the height to which the the river rose in the several years of which they bear the date. Independently of the novelty of these inscriptions, which are very short, they possess a great value in enabling us to compare the ancient elevations of the waters of the Nile with those of our own time; for the oldest of these records dates back to a period of twenty-two hundred years before the Christian era. Thus, the measurements I have made with the greatest care, and which at this place were taken with comparative facility, on account of the vertical position of the impending rocks, have given the remarkable result, that the average rise of the Nile four thousand years ago, was seven metres, thirty cent. (or about twenty four English feet) higher than it is at the present day.

It will be readily conceived that this great difference in the level of the river, must have had an important influence upon the soil above the cataracts; and it directly explains a fact that had previously surprised me, viz: that in all the valley of Nubia, the level of the soil upon both shores, although it consists entirely of alluvium deposited by the Nile, is much more elevated than the highest level of the river in the best year of modern inundation; for the whole country has now to be irrigated by hydraulic machines called *Sakie.*

The cataract of Semneh could never have influenced the height of the river between Wady-Halfa and Assouan; but we may suppose that the cataract of Assouan was in ancient times much more closed than at present; because we observe the same elevation of the soil in this part of the valley; [between the first and second cataracts.] The mean elevation of the soil above the mean height of the river, is here (Philæ) somewhere from three to four metres, (from 10¼ to 16¼ feet.) But this same country still presents the traces of a much more ancient state, beyond the record of history, when the granite mountains which separated Ethiopia from Egypt obstructed the passage of the river, and formed real lakes in some localities; as for instance, in the gullies or gulfs between the rocks in the Arabian chain, wherein we observe hillocks of Nile earth which rise ordinarily even to ten and eleven metres (thirty-four to thirty-seven feet) above the level of the highest modern inundation.

In reference to the preceding facts, it may perhaps be interesting to the members of your Society to examine some specimens of the different layers of the earth of the Nile, and I have accordingly sent, in a tin case, the following examples:

1. Earth of the Nile, taken from the summit of hillocks at thirty feet above the present level of the river, upon its eastern bank, half an hour (about a mile) above Korosco, [nearly sixty miles above Assouan.]
2. Some of the present soil of the valley of Korosco, taken at a height of three feet above the Nile.
3. Specimen of the earth newly deposited at Korosco, the 18th of August, 1844.
4. A little sand taken from the thermal spring at Okmé, on the southern frontier of the Province of Butir-el-Hagar, which is the only spring of the kind, to my knowledge, in all the valley of the Nile. It is on the western bank of the river, and issues from the earth at a temperature of 44° Reaum." (130° Fahr.)

The following extract from another letter from Dr. Lepsius, of the same date, addressed to Mr. Gliddon, was also read by the Chairman.

"We shall leave this (the Island of Philæ) in a few days, and hope to arrive at Thebes in a month. We shall remain there during the winter, and shall return during the spring through Syria, Asia Minor, Constantinople and Greece, to our fatherland, where we shall arrive in the course of the next summer."

Meeting for Business, January 28, 1845.

VICE PRESIDENT WETHERILL in the Chair.

After the Monthly Report of the Corresponding Secretary had been read, and some other business transacted, the Society proceeded to elect the different Standing Committees for 1845. The Tellers reported the following result: